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МЕЖДУНАРОДНАЯ АМНИСТИЯ
منظمة العفو الدولية
國際特赦組織

TG 5037

URGENT ACTION

PUBLIC **AI Index: ASA 21/48/99**

EXTRA 65/99 **Fear for safety** **3 June 1999**

EAST TIMOR

Marta Fatima (f)
Ivao Ribeiro (f)
Jorgina Sarmento (f)
Remija da Concicao (f)
Noveva (f)
Agusta (f)
Justina Santa (f)
Gracilda Varela (f)
Anita Lemos (f)
Elvira (f)
Terasa Varela (f)

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of the 11 women from Liquisa named above who are reportedly being held hostage by the militia group *Besi Merah Putih* (BMP), Iron Red and White, since late May 1999. A local village leader in contact with the militias has reportedly said they will be killed. The women are apparently being sexually molested in detention.

Since the beginning of April the BMP and other militia groups, supported by the *Tentara Nasional Indonesia* (TNI), Indonesian Armed Forces, have detained, tortured and killed scores of people in violent attacks across East Timor in an attempt to locate supporters of independence for the region. At least 18 people, possibly many more, were killed in Liquisa on 6 April when the BMP and militias attacked a church where about 2000 local people had sought refuge from the attacks. The 11 women were taken hostage and threatened with death when the BMP were unable to find their husbands in hiding. The BMP reportedly now have total control of Liquisa.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A number of militia groups, including the BMP, have been formed in recent months in the face of increased pressure to find a political solution to the situation in East Timor. These militia groups have actively targeted supporters of independence with a campaign of killing, detention, ill-treatment, intimidation and harassment. They have also destroyed homes and raped women, leaving thousands of people internally displaced. Despite clear evidence of its support for the militia units the TNI denies responsibility for the actions of the groups.

In January 1999 the Indonesian government announced that it would grant East Timor independence if a proposed autonomy package was rejected by the East Timorese. On 5 May Indonesia and Portugal signed an agreement allowing for a popular consultation on autonomy. The ballot is scheduled to take place on 8 August.

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RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/faxes/express/airmail letters in Bahasa Indonesia or English or your own language:

- expressing concern for the safety of 11 women from Liquisa, naming them all if possible, who were taken hostage by Besi Merah Putih at the end of May 1999;
- urging the authorities to ensure that the women are immediately and unconditionally released;
- urging the authorities to launch an immediate investigation into their abduction by the BMP and ensuring their subsequent safety;
- urging the authorities to prevent the detention of supporters of independence and their families by either militia groups or military units;
- calling on the authorities to disarm and disband the BMP and all other militia groups.

APPEALS TO (please note that fax tones can be difficult to obtain during certain times of the day. You may have the best chance of success if you ring during local office hours +8 GMT):

Minister of Defence and Security
General Wiranto
Menteri Pertahanan dan Keamanan
Jl. Medan Merdeka
Jakarta 10110
Indonesia
Telegrams: **General Wiranto, Jakarta, Indonesia**
Faxes: **+ 62 21 381 4535 / 384 5178**
Salutation: **Dear Minister**

Commander Resort Military Command (Korem) 164/Wiradharma
(covers East Timor)
Colonel Tono Suratman
Markas KOREM 164/Wiradharma
Dili
East Timor, Indonesia
Telegrams: **Colonel Suratman, East Timor, Indonesia**
Faxes: **+ 62 390 321 624**
Salutation: **Dear Colonel Suratman**

COPIES TO:

President Jusuf Habibie
President RI
Istana Negara
Jl. Veteran
Jakarta Pusat
Indonesia
Faxes: **+ 62 21 526 8726 / 21 380 5511 / 21 345 7782 (via ministry of Foreign Affairs)**

and to diplomatic representatives of Indonesia accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.